

Lagos, Nigeria, December 30, 1926.

Dear Margaret:

It was sweet of you to write so soon after I left! The very next boat after the one I was on had your nice letter of November 19. You have done wonders in getting the family medical affairs so far along in one week. The next letter will reach me after New Year's day and will probably tell about Thanksgiving Day and Victor's visit, and in the due course of events I shall hear about the jolly Christmas and the new radio from Father, etc. Please keep up the stream of letters, for I should be greatly disappointed if one of the fortnightly mail boats should slip in without anything for me. I should like to hear from the children too. How are the dancing lesson's progressing?

My New Jersey Standard stock is common, and there is very little of it, as it is only on a par value of \$25. I doubt if the reorganization will have any effect on me unless the company gives the holders of common stock an opportunity to buy new shares at an advantage. The newspapers and the bank can tell you.

Things have been going on quietly and well here. The harmattan has stopped for a while, and we can no longer look the sun in the eye when it is an hour or two above the horizon. The afternoons and nights are hotter, but entirely bearable. In the office the electric fan makes it possible to work in comfort almost any time. My daily program is more hygienic than it has been for years. At half past five I play tennis and keep it up until nearly seven, when I take my shower and put on fresh clothes and mosquito boots and go to dinner. It is great to have a tennis court on our own grounds! It is also pleasant to have a colored boy with a tray follow you up in the middle of the morning or afternoon with a glass of orange juice and water or some other beverage of preference. One is always thirsty.

I have a personal boy named Harrison and the office boy is Wilfred. Adam is the chauffeur, and Marshall the head boy of the community mess. I don't know who gave them their names. Many of the people have tribal markings in the form of parallel scars on their cheeks. We have 46 natives working here at the compound and about nine more serving three of the staff in Ibadan and Accra. Altogether there are ten Europeans on the staff. We are occupying about ten acres of land: I cannot say just how much as the back boundary is not definite. We have six major buildings and about seven minor ones, and the construction of three more is about to commence next week; we hope. My Tuesday morning inspection is quite an undertaking.

Dr. Bauer is doing some interesting work. He has modified Noguchi's leptospira medium and has been isolating leptospira from pools, sewers, tanks, etc. He filters the water through Berkefeld filters and uses the filtrate. He frequently gets pure cultures of some strain of leptospira, as the bacteria are held back. It looks as if these methods would soon reveal a large number of free-living leptospira. They are large organisms and it is almost unbelievable that they should pass through the fine filters so easily. People used to expect ultra-microscopic organisms under these circumstances. Dr. Bauer is very friendly and I feel entirely at home in the laboratory. The equipment is excellent. As soon as I have read up the records of the earlier work, I hope to spend much more time in the laboratory and also ~~making~~ inspections in the field.

At noon on Christmas Day we were guests of Dr. and Mrs. Connal of the Medical Research Institute, and in the evening I went to a dinner at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Gray. The latter was a dinner dance- dancing after every course. The noon affair was very pleasant, but I did not feel entirely at ease in the evening, as you may imagine. Plenty of drink, dancing most of the time, and an embarrassing use of mistletoe, made the evening somewhat of an ordeal to one of my frugal habits and limited accomplishments. Don't imagine that the affairs are formal. Far from it! One of the favorite forms of humor at both functions was throwing things across the table at anyone who seemed unduly serious. The missiles were mostly wads of paper from the everpresent paper hats of the snapping bon-bons, but one was never surprised if he received a bit of bread or chocolate. There is no quiet conversation with one's neighbor. One really cannot make a good imitation of Christmas without children, and only the missionaries bring them to Nigeria. I don't believe I have seen one white child in Lagos since my arrival.

I have forgotten to tell about the "At Home" at Government House. The invitation is enclosed. Also the dance card. There was dancing in a sort of pavilion out of doors, and, as there was a huge excess of men, there were bridge tables in some of the rooms. I was introduced to the Governor, Sir Graeme Thomson, and Lady Thomson.

I hope that you are all getting along splendidly, and that the furnace is behaving like a gentleman. Much love to you all.

*Walter*